

2014

ANNUAL

POINT-IN-TIME

STREET

& SHELTER SURVEY

REPORT



**Blue Ridge
Continuum of Care**

2014 Winter Point-in-Time Street and Shelter Survey Report

Coordinated by

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Introduction

Point in time counts of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness occurs yearly in each jurisdiction nationwide. In Virginia, this count takes place on a single night in late January. In order to qualify for federal homeless assistance funds, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires communities to conduct a point in time count not less than bi-annually. The Blue Ridge Interagency Council on Homelessness, the governance body for homeless services in the region, is the lead entity that conducts the point-in-time count annually. The data collected provides valuable information to area service providers, policy makers, and the general public on the individual and family challenges and barriers associated with homelessness.

Homelessness directly affects thousands of Virginians annually. According to the 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, there were 4,532 homeless people in Virginia during a 24 hour snap shot conducted in January by localities statewide. Four to five times that number may actually experience homelessness at some point during the year, according to national homeless studies. Many of these persons have special needs based on situations ranging from physical or mental disabilities to chronic substance abuse. Of the total homeless population, many are also victims of other circumstances such as job loss or domestic violence.

In 2014 the number of homeless in the Roanoke Region (including Alleghany County) decreased from 527 in 2013 to 440 in 2014. This is a significant decrease of 16.5% and represents a trend of decreasing numbers over the past three years in the Roanoke Region. Environmental factors over which we have little control such as an economy that is slowly improving may be influencing this downward trend in numbers. More likely however, is that the downward trend is being influenced by factors that we do control. Homeless



service providers have restructured the way they work together to address issues of homelessness. They have put together rapid rehousing and homeless prevention strategies such as a system of central intake and a community housing resource center to reduce the amount of time people spend in a homeless condition. They are reducing redundancy in services by using sophisticated information management systems to share information among agency service providers. Collaboration among agencies and organizations has become a norm not an anomaly. The results of these changes are significant factors influencing the downward trend in numbers. In a recent report to Roanoke City Council by the Chair of the Continuum of Care, it was reported that the average length of time for a homeless person from entry into shelter to placement in permanent housing decreased by 67% in the last six months and; the average length of time from program referral to placement in permanent housing is now 16 days.

Data in this year's point in time survey tell us that finding affordable housing and an inability to find work are among the reasons most often cited for being homeless. These and other barriers facing the homeless such as affordable

health and oral health care in this report are indicators that there is yet much to be done to resolve the underlying causes of homelessness.

Because of its strong safety net of services, Roanoke continues to attract people from outside the region who find themselves in a homeless condition, but they represent a smaller percentage of the total population. This year's report indicates 42.5% of respondents came to the Blue Ridge Continuum of Care catchment area in a homeless condition compared to 48.8% in 2013.

This year's point in time Survey process again includes information about homeless individuals who were surveyed using the Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness (VCEH) 1000 Homes for 1000 Virginians vulnerability index. The goal of the initiative is to identify, and house, the most vulnerable people who experience homelessness. Jefferson College of Health Sciences Physician Assistant students again this year, administered the vulnerability index to those experiencing homelessness on the street. The results of that effort can be found in Appendix A of this report.

Methodology

The PIT survey instrument used for this survey was identical to the one used in 2013. The procedures utilized to collect information were as consistent as possible with those used in prior surveys. One difference of note is that this year the count was completed in one day, January 30, 2014 as opposed to last year when the count was collected over a period of five days. Of the 440 individuals who were homeless on January 30, 2014, 257 adults ages 18 and older completed the survey. Children under the age of 18 were not surveyed. Service provider staff, the Homeless Assistance Team and other volunteers surveyed homeless adult clients. Shelters were contacted for permission to survey clients with 100% of shelters electing to participate in the survey.

Shelters

- Family Promise
- Total Action for Progress – Transitional Living Center
- TRUST House
- Safe Home Systems (Covington)
- Turning Point
- Red Shield Lodge
- Rescue Mission

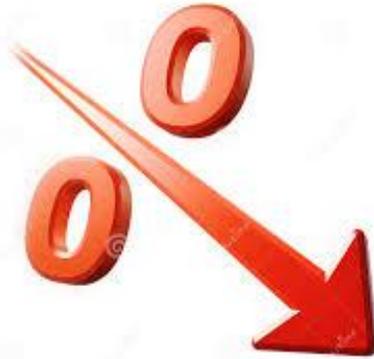
Street Outreach

- Roanoke – Homeless Assistance Team
- Alleghany County



Key Findings

- Nightly count averages in 2014 decreased by 16.5% (440 compared to 527 in 2013)
- 257 shelter respondents (adults 18 and over) completed the survey. This is a 29% increase over 2013 or 58 more respondents.
- 57.6% of respondents were living in the Blue Ridge Continuum of Care catchment area when they became homeless compared to 51.2% in 2013.
- The top 5 challenges faced by homeless include:
 - Affordable housing (#1 in 2013)
 - Cannot find work (#2 in 2013)
 - Medical problems (#3 in 2013)
 - Dental problems (#4 in 2013)
 - Past incarcerations (#6 in 2013)
- The oldest respondent is 65 years old and the youngest is 19. The average age is 45.7 years compared to 49 in 2013.
- 149 men (58.4%) and 102 women (40%) completed the survey
- 55.3% (141) of those surveyed identified themselves as white and 36.1% (92) identified themselves as African-American
- 19% (48) of respondents are Veteran's.
- 28.5% (73) of respondents report having received mental health services in the past
- 20.6% (53) of respondents report having received treatment for problems related to alcohol
- 18% (46) of respondents report having been treated for drug dependency
- 81.2% (207) report having a high school/GED education or more. Educational attainment has been trending upward since 2011 (73.4%, 77.9%, and 79.9%)
- 34.7% (85) of respondents are employed either "on" or "off" the books, just slightly down <1% from 2013

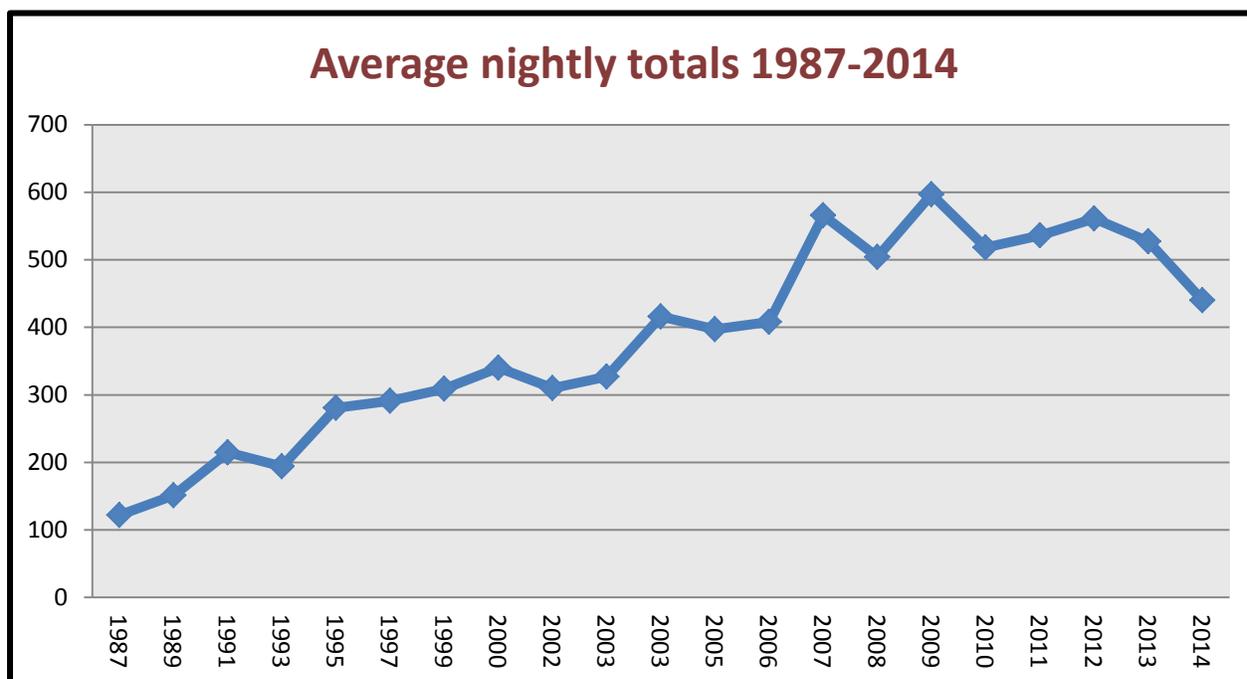


- 46.1% (113) report making money on food stamps
- 57.4% (147) of respondents report looking for work compared to only 51.8% or 124 looking in 2013.
- 76.9% (163) of respondents report they have never heard of the Community Housing Resource Center. There were 16 respondents (6.3%) who have received services from the CHRC, an increase of 3 respondents over 2013 and 10 respondents in 2012.
- There are 80 children under age 18 with their homeless parent(s). 43 children between the ages of 5-18 are attending school while 6 are not attending school

2014 Shelter Count

The total number of homeless individuals in this years' count is 440*. The number of adults experiencing homelessness totaled 373 and the number of homeless children totaled 67. The numbers have been trending downward since 2012.

Facility/Locality	Adults	Children
Family Promise	5	8
Roanoke street count	4	0
TAP-TLC	25	13
TRUST	24	1
Safe Home Systems (Covington)	3	2
Turning Point	14	9
Red Shield Lodge	58	0
Rescue Mission	237	34
Allegheny County street count	3	0
Totals	373	67



2014 Point-In-Time Shelter Survey Results

Gender

Answer Options	Response Count	Response Percent
Male	149	58.4%
Female	102	40.0%
Transgender	1	0.4%
Declined to state	3	1.2%
Other	0	0.0%
	Answered	255
	Skipped	2

Race

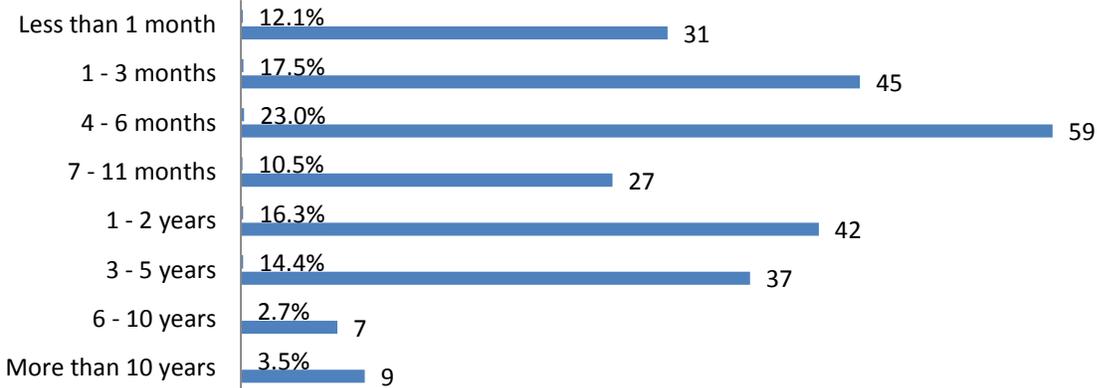
What racial/ethnic group do you identify with the most (choose only one)?	Response Count	Response Percent
White/Caucasian	141	55.3%
Black/African American	92	36.1%
Mixed race	7	2.7%
Asian	2	0.8%
American Indian/Alaska Native and White	2	0.8%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1	0.4%
Asian and White	1	0.4%
Decline to state	1	0.4%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
Other (please specify)*	8	3.1%
	Answered question	255
	Skipped question	2

3 respondents who indicated "other" identified as Hispanic/Latino, 1 identified as Indian

Respondents

Survey respondents	Response Count	Response Percent
Street Canvassing	0	0.0%
Safe Homes (Covington)	2	0.8%
HAT	2	0.8%
Family Promise	5	1.9%
Turning Point	12	4.7%
TRUST House	23	8.9%
TAP - TLC	24	9.3%
Red Shield Lodge	35	13.6%
Rescue Mission - Women's and Children's Shelter	66	25.7%
Rescue Mission - Men's Shelter	88	34.2%
	Answered question	257
	Skipped question	0

How long has it been since you had a place to live?

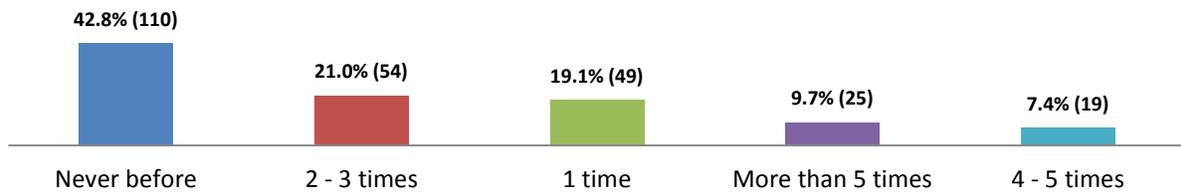


Of the 30 respondents who entered "other", the highest responses were: Physical health/disability (8), Foreclosure (2), Landlord disagreement (2)

Please tell us the primary reason you are currently homeless: Response Count Response Percent

Fire/other disaster	1	0.4%
Unspecified	4	1.5%
Mental health	7	2.7%
Discharged from an institution	11	4.3%
Substance abuse	9	3.5%
Victim of domestic violence	20	7.8%
Evicted from home, unrelated to payment	28	10.9%
Unable to pay rent	28	10.9%
Family problems	46	17.9%
Unemployed	73	28.4%
Other (please specify)	30	11.7%
	Answered question	257
	Skipped question	0

How many times have you been homeless prior to your current situation?



Where were you residing when you became homeless?	Response Count	Response Percent
Roanoke City	114	44.4%
Roanoke County/Vinton	16	6.2%
Salem	11	4.3%
Botetourt County	5	1.9%
Alleghany County	2	0.8%
Clifton Forge	0	0.0%
Other (please specify)	109	42.4%
Answered question	257	
Skipped question	0	

Of those who came to Roanoke from some other place, 74 were from other jurisdictions in Virginia and 35 came from other states.

If you became homeless somewhere other than Roanoke, why did you come to Roanoke? (Choose one main reason)	Response Count	Response Percent
Ran out of money	1	0.4%
Substance abuse program	2	0.8%
To obtain healthcare	3	1.2%
Probation/Parole officer	3	1.2%
Personal reasons	4	1.6%
Domestic violence program	5	1.9%
Referred	5	1.9%
Veterans Administration	7	2.8%
Find a job	9	3.5%
Friends/family are here	22	8.7%
Shelter only	39	15.4%
Not applicable	117	46.1%
Other (please specify)	37	14.5%
Answered question	254	
Skipped question	3	

Where did you sleep last night?	Response Count	Response Percent
Psychiatric facility	0	0.0%
Hotel or motel (no voucher)	0	0.0%
Foster care home	0	0.0%
Substance abuse treatment center or detox	0	0.0%
Hospital (non-psychiatric)	1	0.39%
Rented housing unit	1	0.39%
Owned housing unit	1	0.39%
Place not meant for human habitation	1	0.39%
Jail, prison, or juvenile detention	2	0.78%
Permanent supportive housing	2	0.78%
Staying with family	3	1.2%
Domestic violence shelter	10	3.9%
Transitional shelter	74	28.8%
Emergency shelter	160	62.2%
Other (please specify)*	2	0.78%
Answered question	257	
Skipped question	0	

*Other responses included the "Rescue Mission" and "friend"

Have you been denied a bed at a local shelter in the last 12 months because it was full?	Response Count	Response Percent
Yes	17	6.7%
No	237	93.3%
Answered question	254	
Skipped question	3	

How many children under the age of 18 do you have with you?	Response Count	Response Percent
0 Children	218	85.2%
1 Child	15	5.9%
2 Children	11	4.3%
3 Children	8	3.1%
4 Children	1	0.4%
5+ Children	3	1.2%
Answered question	256	
Skipped question	1	

43 school age children are attending school, 6 are not attending school.

How do you handle child care?	Response Count	Response Percent
Not applicable	209	85.7%
I do not need child care	7	2.87%
Friends/family	7	2.87%
I take care of my children myself	9	3.69%
Child care center	4	1.64%
Other (please specify)	8	3.28%
Answered question	236	
Skipped question	21	

Are you a veteran of the US military?	Response Count	Response Percent
Yes	48	18.8%
No	207	81.2%
Answered question	255	
Skipped question	2	

What is the highest level of education that you completed?	Response Count	Response Percent
K - 8	5	2.0%
Some high school	43	16.8%
High school graduate	75	29.3%
GED	38	14.8%
Some college	63	24.6%
College graduate	22	8.6%
Post graduate	9	3.5%
Declined to state	1	0.4%
Answered question	256	
Skipped question	1	

80.8% or 207 respondents report having a high school/GED education or more. This is trending upward since 2011.

Are you actively looking for work?	Response Count	Response Percent
Not applicable	31	12.1%
Yes	147	57.4%
No	78	30.5%
Answered question	256	
Skipped question	1	

How do you make money? (Check all that apply)	Response Count	Response Percent
Drug trade	0	0.0%
Sex trade	0	0.0%
Pension/Retirement	1	0.26%
Recycling	2	0.52%
Panhandling	2	0.52%
Public assistance	10	2.56%
Veterans Administration	11	2.82%
SSI	15	3.84%
Work, off the books	23	5.89%
SSDI	32	8.19%
Work, on the books	62	15.86%
No income	78	19.95%
Food stamps	113	28.90%
Other (please specify)	42	10.75%
Answered question	245	
	(391 total responses)	
Skipped question	12	

How do you mainly get around? (Check all that apply)	Response Count	Response Percent
Licensed motorized vehicle	32	8.94%
Valley Metro bus	135	37.71%
Walk	137	38.27%
Scooter/Bicycle	7	1.96%
Ride with family/friends	22	6.15%
Other (please specify)	25	6.99%
Answered question	245	
	(358 total responses)	
Skipped question	12	

25 "other" responses included Rescue Mission Transportation (16), Mental Health Worker/Counselor (2), Radar (2), Dominion Day Services (1), Shelter and Disability ride (1), Pay someone (1), and sometimes co-worker (1)

If you get sick, where do you go for medical attention?	Response Count	Response Percent
Emergency room	74	26.6%
Rescue Mission Healthcare Center	63	22.8%
Private doctor	32	11.5%
VA Medical Center	31	11.1%
Urgent care	10	3.6%
New Horizons	10	3.6%
Bradley Free Clinic	9	3.2%
Health Department	1	0.36%
Other (please specify)	48	17.3
Answered question	230	
	(278 responses total)	
Skipped question	27	

Do you take medications?	Response Count	Response Percent
Yes	149	58.2%
No	107	41.8%
Answered question	256	
Skipped question	1	

If yes how do you obtain your medication? (Check primary source)	Response Count	Response Percent
I purchase them from a drug store	41	23.0%
I get them from a service provider	61	34.3%
I cannot afford my medications	15	8.4%
Other (please specify)	61	34.3%
Answered question	178	
Skipped question	79	

61 "other" responses includes: VA. Medical Center(20), Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare, Rescue Mission Clinic, Bradley Free Clinic, New Horizons, Charity Care, HAT, Medicare/Medicaid (12)

How do you pay for medical care?	Response Count	Response Percent
Medicaid	60	23.5%
Out of pocket	51	20.0%
Private insurance	8	3.1%
Medicare	4	1.6%
Other	132	51.8%
Answered question	255	
Skipped question	2	

Are you CURRENTLY receiving mental health services?	Response Count	Response Percent	Have you PREVIOUSLY received mental health services	Response Count	Response Percent
Yes	73	28.5%	Yes	98	38.3%
No	183	71.5%	No	158	61.7%
Answered question	256		Answered question	256	
Skipped question	1		Skipped question	1	

Have you ever received treatment for problems related to alcohol?	Response Count	Response Percent
Yes	53	20.6%
No	204	79.4%
Answered question	257	
Skipped question	0	

Have you ever been treated for drug dependency?	Response Count	Response Percent
Yes	46	18.0%
No	210	82.0%
Answered question	256	
Skipped question	1	

Of the following common characteristics and challenges faced by those without a home, please indicate which affect you. (Choose all that apply)	Response Count	Response Percent
Cannot find affordable housing	161	16.38%
Cannot find work	138	14.04%
Medical problems	105	10.69%
Dental problems	92	9.36%
Past incarceration	77	7.84%
Physical disability	70	7.13%
Divorce	69	7.02%
I cannot afford my medications	63	6.41%
Legal problems/Problems with police	50	5.09%
Victim of domestic violence	46	4.68%
Challenges with substance abuse	36	3.67%
Child custody disputes	23	2.34%
Previous foster care	18	1.84%
Other (please specify)	35	3.56%
Answered question	242	
	(983 total responses)	
Skipped question	15	



Comments:

Please share any comments or thoughts you have about being without housing.

- It's a humbling situation; don't know where to go or what to do.
- Don't know about programs to help maintain stable job/education.
- No problem just looking for a place to live.
- It's stressful.
- Traveling from state to state
- Anxious about transportation. Missed orientation because of this.
- Some questions should be confidential.
- It bites.
- I appreciate Family Promises help without them I'd be out in my girl with my girls with nowhere to go.
- Family Promise is a great program. I've learned a lot by going through this with them.
- It is frustrating not having a home. I am happy to be here, but would love my own apartment!
- I found a home and I will be moving into it soon. I want to be able to provide for my daughter and before not having a home made me sad and scared
- It is what it is.
- Need more affordable housing for those living at minimum wage.
- Demoralizing.
- Very depressing not having my own and not being able to cook my own meals and not being able to have family gatherings.
- I don't like it. I owned my house since 1986 and I worked the same job for 29 years. It doesn't seem right.
- Does not consider himself homeless since he has shelter.
- Just hoping to find work.
- I would like to register with HAT to receive housing assistance.
- Not having a house limits your abilities to get work and maintain a job. Carrying your belongings everywhere you go is difficult for interviewing - you have to find places to stash it and hope someone doesn't steal it.
- Finding a rhythm - easier to make your own, morning vs. evening
- First homeless in 98 since that time he has been really worn down from being homeless and feels it made him feel more despair.
- Waiting on his SSI
- Really struggling, don't care anymore. Thinking about entering into a mental institution.
- Plans to find housing in the near future.

- The city needs to open more 24 hour shelters!
- Need more jobs available - need more shoes, clothing - need more access to bus passes.
- Nobody should have to sleep in a chair.
- Shouldn't have to go to chapel every night, it's a Sunday event.
- Children and moms should eat first especially during cold days
- Not enough food, drink available during meals.
- Very sad, hope and pray I get a job and back on my feet.
- Feel lost, helpless, discouraged
- My only problem is finding a job.
- Rescue Mission has saved my life. If it wasn't for this place I wouldn't be living. I don't want to be on the streets.
- He needs a state identification
- Don't like to be out in the cold and weather.
- It sucks.
- I'll probably die homeless.
- Just want own space - been looking.
- Grateful they have this place.
- Staff respectful, if you treat them with respect
- HAT + VA CARES is great, they have fantastic resources
- Learned a lot of humility, which offers graciousness, if you make it something good, you can get something out of it.
- It hurts.
- If I could find a roommate that does not do drugs.
- It sucks.
- Will be glad when he can get housing.
- It's difficult not being able to shower and come and go when you want.
- It sucks
- Everyone makes mistakes, pay the penalty for spending time in jail, but also by not qualifying for food stamps and low income. It's discouraging.
- Transition of getting on his feet. Director of RAM House is not treating homeless people fairly.
- Appreciates having the Rescue Mission - needing to be patient and do the best he can. Being homeless has been difficult.
- Knows if he can find a job he can do well. Can't find job because of criminal history
- Hoping to find a job and affordable housing.
- Weird, learning experience, it's difficult at times
- It stinks. You're always on edge.
- No valid driver's license - need to be employed.
- It's very difficult, it's a struggle, hard to manage house without steady job. Not affordable for me since I don't have a steady job.
- It sucks.
- First confused about Salvation Army.
- Dog just passed away - 16 years old named Lady. Likes working out, watching football games, play chess, people steal a lot, not out in the street.
- Rescue Mission does a wonderful job considering what they have to work with.
- I would like to find my own place to live so I can see my children. My goal is to get a place on my own.
- Try to find a place that isn't infested with rodents.

- Want own place, on my own.
- Very stressful
- Fine place.
- Sad, not good to think of the status. I know I'm homeless because I've been through a lot of things.
- I'm getting all the help I can.
- It's really depressing.
- Sucks.
- Devastating, disappointment in myself.
- Gets regular meals, good transportation, staff needs to be nicer.
- Like to find affordable housing.
- Lost, dysfunction, ashamed, saddened by it, looking towards the future. I have learned a few things: learned who I am, better understanding of self, more confidence in self, not afraid to ask for help, learning to take guidance.
- It sucks. It's given me a chance to learn how to live life the hard way. Not everything is handed to me.
- Only temporary, glad Rescue Mission is here.
- I'm glad I called the Rescue Mission; they need made me feel welcome rather than being on the streets.
- It's not good! Really trying to hurry this up the quicker - I can find housing, the quicker my kids can get home.
- Extremely stressful on everyone.
- I would like to have a place of my own so I can take care of my responsibilities and live life.
- Grateful for Rescue Mission, very challenging to make the right decisions to get out of her situation.
- Roanoke is more sympathetic to homeless. Able to get a library card! :)
- Better opportunity.
- I'd like to have a job and get my own apartment.
- Trying to get out of here, really need money. Applying for jobs like crazy!
- Want to know actions after she has baby - if she will be able to transition and comeback and get out in time for housing.
- It sucks. I hate it.
- It's hard. It's rough when you have 1 year old and it gets depressing sometimes.
- It sucks.
- Very grateful for services of Rescue Mission with all amenities provided. Plans on leaving with stable income and recovery.
- I am pretty grateful for the mission, they gave me a place to stay, eat, and help find work.
- Nobody wants to stay on the streets, really hard to deal with.
- Don't like not having a home, once she gets a home she will do everything to stay in it.
- Staff needs to do more to help with getting people back on feet - referrals, classes...
- Nothing. Looking to go back to Brooklyn on Wednesday.
- When you have your own vehicle being homeless it can be more costly because you have to keep the maintenance. It's not only your car but housing as well. And it cannot store all belongings so you pay for storage as well.
- Not very happy about it.
- It sucks.
- I wish I could wake up in the morning and be in my own home with money.
- No privacy; can't cook or watch what you want. My other kids can't visit and stay with me.

- Government should do something about. Hard working with people who have attitudes and don't help you. Hard being in the cold and getting help while it's cold.
- Stressful - caused me to lose my twins. We don't choose to be homeless and people don't understand. Hate; never thought of it in a million years.
- Depressing for age, dependency on others
- Stressful
- Just thankful Rescue Mission was available with medical emergency with my husband.
- I have family members that have their own place but won't help me out; it's kinda rough.
- Very discouraging. Having a hard time with resources and who to talk to. You don't realize how much you miss sweeping your own floor and doing dishes until it's gone.
- Try not to think about it that much.
- It sucks. I am really trying hard to find a job to find a place.
- Many obstacles in getting public assistance and a long process.
- It sucks. It's really hard, extremely difficult for me and my son.
- Really don't like it, it's hard.
- It's like living in hell. Grateful for services receiving.
- Not comfortable with it. Wants to have her husband in shelter with her.
- Rough, really rough; it's real hard. It's a dilemma.
- Failure; depressed.
- Very stressful and can't wait to have my own place for me and my children.
- I hate it. I'm overwhelmed, stressed, feeling that I don't matter as a human being.
- I just got accepted to an apartment. Rapid Re-housing is helping me but while I was without/homeless it's been a struggle but Turning Point has helped me tremendously and I thank them!
- Few handicap friendly housing; i.e. steps bathroom
- No comment. Just thank you for your concern.
- It is rough and feels outside the community. Being in a shelter provides some humanity.
- New experience. Have really noticed how many homeless there are and how much help there is.
- The gap of time for day shelter.
- It would be nice to have a house again.
- Shelter needs to expand. More help with transportation and job resources.
- Trying to get back to work. More positive attitude now.
- Goal is to save and get his own place so he can be happy.
- Need more people to work with homeless that have compassion in their heart. Getting bigger every day; some people work it just to get a paycheck.
- Stressful and tough at times dealing with the difficult & different personalities
- Challenging because no peace of mind; no independence - pain in the butt.
- Frustrating and worsens mental health issues.
- Uncomfortable; feels bad
- Thinks that the shelter is a great place/resource for those in a rough spot. He has never been homeless before and is thankful for this shelter while he is trying to find full time work.
- Working to get a home.
- I kind of know about it
- The HAT Team is there they help me to get my birthday.
- I am familiar with Mike Patterson
- Can't get food stamps; still needs housing.

- Not a great way to live.
- May need help securing housing in the future. Many issues stemming from foster care - was kicked out of his home after he was released from jail in December.
- Working fulltime and trying to save money to obtain housing. Feels that the shelter is a great place for him to save money and get away from his abusive relationship.
- Having legal issues regarding a civil liberties case. Cannot find legal advisement on this situation.
- Just never used the services.
- Lost everything due to alcohol.
- It's very hard finding work and getting around. There isn't a lot of programs to help felons. Nor is it help for drug issues for living in. Most people that are homeless have been abused/drugs in the background. Felons need help too.
- Thank you!
- Depressing-feel less of a man. Pride is gone.
- Help me find housing please, need more options.
- I did like to find affordable housing as soon as possible!
- Grateful this place was here to help me
- Having a hard time finding affordable housing
- Has been told for years to apply for disability when he applied, he had a lot of questions thrown at him. Did not feel he has an opportunity to explain himself adequately
- Grateful for assistance received at TLC
- Will be moving soon, this place has helped me a great deal.
- Has not experienced homeless until he was released from jail. Trying to get a place to start over and move on with his life
- It has been a struggle. This place has helped me get on my feet.
- I don't like staying in a shelter with my son, although, T.L.C is the best shelter in the Roanoke Valley. They are Sincere and Compassionate about residents and their stay.
- Glad to find housing
- Please let the rescue mission know I do love them but they need to describe where local resources are at directions would be nice! Kudos to them for providing transportation to appointments. Other than that all the agencies in Roanoke have been very helpful to me.
IE:TRUST, HAT, RAM
- It sucks not to have your own space
- Depressing. I tend to lose my independence and feel worthless. Feel lost in the shuffle as far as services and resources, No one can tell me from the serious or flakes.
- Wish there were more affordable housing. Unable to pay past landlord judgments.
- FEEL DEFEATED, CONCERNED
- It sucks. depressing
- It sucks
- Hopeless.

Conclusion

The 2014 Point in Time Street and Shelter Survey indicates that the Blue Ridge Interagency Advisory Council on Homelessness is making progress in its attempts to reduce homelessness in the Roanoke Valley. With three consecutive years of decreasing numbers in the PIT count, it is safe to say we are seeing a downward trend in the number of people experiencing homelessness.

The dual but intertwined strategies of homelessness prevention and rapid-rehousing put in place by the Blue Ridge Interagency Advisory Council on Homelessness and executed through the Blue Ridge Continuum of Care are proving to be effective. Competent, consistent and collaborative leadership at the governance and service levels combined with better use of data among service providers in the Continuum of Care shows results both in terms of the amount of time spent homeless and the overall reduction in the number of homeless.

Yet, there remains the fact that 440 people were homeless on January 30, 2014, and that is 440 too many. The bullies behind the barriers to housing remain the same, a lack of affordable housing and too few jobs. Even though the data show that a greater percentage of the homeless this year are looking for work than were last year; and even though the homeless here are well educated with 80% having a high school/GED education or higher, they are unable to find gainful employment. Better connections between workforce development efforts in the region and homeless service providers need to be forged to address this problem moving forward.

Still, we should be encouraged by the data on these pages. Given the resources available to address the issue of homelessness, these outcomes are reason to commend those involved the effort to reduce homelessness in the Roanoke Valley.



Appendix A

Vulnerability Index Survey of Street Homeless

Roanoke is one of the original twelve sites¹ in the Commonwealth that continues to survey individuals living on the streets with the following goals:

- Identify the most vulnerable using a tool called the Vulnerability Index [Appendix B].
- Rank their vulnerability by severity
- Systematically house them before their homelessness causes them to die.

Data was collected by Jefferson College of Health Sciences Physician Assistant students on Thursday, January 23rd. Students worked in teams of four with a team leader to canvas all known locations previously identified by Roanoke Homeless Assistance Team where street homeless were known to spend the night. These locations included parks, bridges, parking garages, an elevated walkway, bus station and the Market area. Teams began the survey at 5 AM in order to increase the likelihood of finding vulnerable individuals before they dispersed for the day. Eleven people experiencing homelessness on the streets were identified.

Those surveyed reported 19 emergency room visits in the previous three months and 10 inpatient hospitalizations in the past year.

Medical Vulnerability

Diabetes	18% [2]
Heart conditions	36% [4]
Liver disease	9% [1]
Emphysema	9% [1]
Heat stroke/exhaustion	9% [1]
Reported mental health treatment	72% [8]
Reported drug/alcohol use/treatment	63% [7]
Permanent physical disability*	63% [7]
Brain injury/head trauma	18% [2]
Observed mental health issue	9% [1]
Any emergency room visits	72% [8]
Any inpatient hospital stays	45% [5]

*Permanent physical disabilities

- Limbs – had surgery a few years past and had wheelchair stolen/spine problems and trouble walking/seizures/migraines
- Uses walker for knee problems/stroked with left side weakness
- Broken neck
- Scoliosis
- Toe amputations

¹Richmond, Arlington, Roanoke, Hampton, Newport News, Williamsburg, York County, James City County, Martinsville, Norfolk, VA Beach, Portsmouth, Chesapeake, Suffolk, Isle of Wight County, Franklin and Southampton County, Prince William County, Harrisonburg and Rockingham County.

Social Vulnerability

Environmental Conditions

Victim of physical attack	9% [1]
Incarceration – Jail	72% [8]
Incarceration – Prison	36% [4]
Foster care	18% [2]
Military veteran	18% [2]
Sleeps most often – shelters	63% [7]
Sleeps most often – streets	18% [2]
Sleeps most often – other*	18% [2]
Abandoned house/shed	

Where surveyed [sleeping that night]

Bus station	20% [2]
Bullitt Avenue	10% [1]
Rescue Mission	70% [7]
Unknown	9% [1]

Length of time homeless

2 weeks or less	18% [2]
1-2 years	63% [7]
3-5 years	9% [1]
Unknown	9% [1]

Demographic Information

Male	90% [9]
Female	10% [1]
Age	27 to 61 years [Average 49 years]
White/Caucasian	81% [9]
Black/African American	18% [2]
US citizens	100.0%

Health care providers used

Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital
Rescue Mission Clinic
Lewis Gale Hospital
Salem VA Hospital
New Horizons

The information gathered from the people who were experiencing homelessness on the streets underscores the difficulty faced by the chronically homeless to become and remain housed. Substance abuse, mental health challenges, previous incarceration, and myriad health problems make this population particularly difficult to provide on-going, comprehensive health and social services. Programs such as Rapid Rehousing/Housing 1st, when coupled with intensive case management, have been shown to be effective in assisting this population to remain housed.